

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please amend claims 1 and 12, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A plasma etching method for implementing a specific etching process on a workpiece placed on an electrode provided within a processing chamber by introducing a processing gas into said processing chamber, generating plasma inside said processing chamber with a plasma source and applying biasing power to said electrode, wherein;

an etching step in which the workpiece is etched over a specific length of etching time by applying the biasing power to said electrode and a film formation step in which a protective film is formed as an etching mask at a surface of the workpiece over a specific length of film formation time while the biasing power is decreased or cut off are sequentially repeated, with the ~~lengths of individual etching times and individual film formation time being times adjusted to be~~ increased relative to the length of etching time as the etching process progresses.

2. (Original) A plasma etching method according to claim 1, wherein:

the lengths of the film formation times are extended relative to the extent to which the etching process has progressed.

3. (Original) A plasma etching method according to claim 1, wherein:

the lengths of the film formation times are set at 1 second or longer.

4. (Original) A plasma etching method according to claim 1, wherein:
said etching step is implemented as a final step of said etching process.

5. (Original) A plasma etching method according to claim 1, wherein:
said film formation step is implemented as a first step of said etching process.

6. (Original) A plasma etching method according to claim 1, wherein:
the etching target is a silicon oxide film; and
said processing gas is constituted of a gas containing fluorocarbon gas.

Claims 7-11 (Canceled).

12. (Currently Amended) A plasma etching method according to claim 1,
wherein the length of etching time is ~~relatively~~ decreased relative to the film formation
time as the etching process progresses.

FINNEGAN
HENDERSON
FARABOW
GARRETT &
DUNNER LLP

1300 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
202.408.4000
Fax 202.408.4400
www.finnegan.com